United Nations A/55/PV.100

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

100th plenary meeting
Friday, 18 May 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 122 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/55/745/Add.8)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/55/745/Add.8, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/55/745 and addenda 1 to 7, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Gambia have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 179 *(continued)*

Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects

Final version of the complementary list of relevant civil society actors that do not hold consultative status with the Economic and Social Council nor are members of the Programme Coordination Board of UNAIDS seeking accreditation to the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and its preparatory process, to which no objection from Member States has been received by the UNAIDS secretariat (HIV/AIDS/CRP.2/Add.1/Rev.1) [in English only]

Ms. Mårtensson (Sweden): On behalf of the European Union, I would like to state that we are surprised to see that the revised list — what is being called the final list — of civil society actors, which was distributed yesterday for approval by the General Assembly today, has been shortened without any explanation whatsoever. We would have expected — at least, based on previous practice and on the relevant resolution 1996/31 of the Economic and Social Council — to be informed as to whether the Secretariat had decided not to recommend some of the civil society actors or as to whether there had been any official objection from a Member State. Such information from the Secretariat should include the reasons and the criteria, which we assume to be based on the competence and relevance of the actors, for the exclusions from the list before us today.

We have no intention of blocking the approval of the revised list, as it is essential that the remaining civil society actors listed there be able to be present at next week's meeting and, particularly, to participate in the

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side events. However, we would like to make it clear that we reserve our position on both how to deal with those civil society actors that have been excluded from the list and in regard to the procedure that has been utilized by the Secretariat.

We therefore do not consider that the list that we will adopt today is final and we look forward to a prompt response by the Secretariat that would clarify the situation, in terms of both the actual organizations and the procedure, and that would allow us to move forward and finalize the list.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): My intervention is on the same point as that made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

My delegation finds it very disquieting that the list has been changed from the list that we saw on 19 April. Three non-governmental organizations that were listed in the old list under the numbers 182, 183 and 184 have been stricken from it. In the name of transparency, which should be a main principle underlying all that the General Assembly does, we find it downright unacceptable that there is not even a footnote in the document telling the membership at large that there have been objections on a non-objection basis. That is the system that we have decided on for the accreditation of new non-governmental organizations to the General Assembly.

The transparency matter in this question is one of principle. I do not think that any secretariat or any presidency of the General Assembly can make that kind of change, even though the change may be legitimate, based on the resolutions that the General Assembly has decided on. Such changes have to be pointed out to the membership at large and I do not think that a "Rev.1" at the end of a document symbol is sufficient in that respect.

There was a very long and difficult discussion on this on informal informals. It was also voiced, by my delegation at least, that we understood the formula that was decided on for consideration to be on a non-objection basis for final decision by the General Assembly. However, for the General Assembly to take a meaningful final decision, it has to know that changes have been made in a document that has been submitted to it at an earlier date. That is a bedrock principle of the United Nations and cannot be broken by the presidency, the Secretariat or anybody else.

Thus, I think we find ourselves in a very difficult situation here. We have a session coming up on Monday for the discussion of the declaration of commitments; the non-governmental organizations are not part of that session, but they are here for other events and side events. We find it very unfortunate that we have only one day or a weekend to sort out this matter. I do not think that is possible, so my delegation will go along with the list as it stands today, but we will certainly reserve our position on the future discussion on the three non-governmental organizations that have been stricken from the list without any explanation from those who have a duty to explain how this came about.

Mr. von Kaufmann (Canada): I should like very briefly to agree entirely with the comments that have been made by my colleagues from Sweden, for the European Union, and Norway. We find it unacceptable that the list has been changed without any explanation and we look forward to seeing those explanations in the very near future.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the final version of the complementary list of relevant civil society actors that do not hold consultative status with the Economic and Social Council nor are members of the Programme Coordination Board of UNAIDS seeking accreditation to the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and its preparatory process, as contained in document HIV/AIDS/CRP.2/Add.1/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to approve the final version of the complementary list of relevant civil society actors that do not hold consultative status with the Economic and Social Council nor are members of the Programme Coordination Board of UNAIDS seeking accreditation to the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and its preparatory process, as contained in document HIV/AIDS/CRP.2/Add.1/Rev.1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 179.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.